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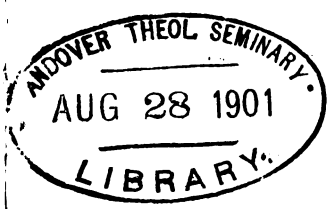
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THE GENIUS OF THE ROMAN RITE

BY

EDMUND BISHOP.

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THE GENIUS

— OF THE —

ROMAN RITE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
JOHN H. BISHOP, D.D., OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

BY

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The Genius of the Roman Rite.*

(It is with much diffidence that I venture to address any assembly on the subject of this paper, or, indeed, discuss the Liturgy at all. On questions connected with the origin, the relations, the extension, or the history of the Roman rite, much has indeed been said and learnedly written any time during this last fifty or sixty years; much has been disputed with regard to it within certain circles, and hotly disputed too. Yet, after all, as the result of so much labour and zeal it cannot be said, I think, that much real knowledge of the subject exists.) By "*real knowledge*," I mean knowledge of such a kind as can be grasped by the educated man who is no specialist, but who, regarding the Roman Liturgy as a factor, and no inconsiderable factor, in the religious history of the past, desires to possess some common notions as to its character, compared with other rites that have existed in the Christian world; and would wish to know why, whilst they have been discarded, it has become so widely spread and is now universal throughout the West. Learned volume accumulates on learned volume, theory is elaborated after theory, and yet the remark which has been reported to me of an eminent historical writer, accustomed to all the niceties of critical inquiry, has only too much justification. "In the course of my studies of the early middle ages," he said, "I have not infrequently had need to obtain information on liturgical subjects in order to understand the general history. I turn to the most authorised books on the subject, and I confess I cannot understand them, or bring what they say into accord with the results obtained by the accepted modern methods of investigation."

I am afraid I may have already managed to possess my hearers with a somewhat unfavourable opinion in regard,

* A paper read at the meeting of the Historical Research Society on Monday, May 5th, 1899.

generally, to the subject of this essay. I should be sorry to do so, for it is really a subject of deep interest, and one which it is desirable that, as Catholics, we should be able to understand. And my belief is that the history of our sacred rites should be matter quite capable of rational and simple exposition.

But our subject this evening is a much narrower one. It will be well, first of all, to understand precisely what is meant by the title of this essay: "The Genius of the Roman Rite." Someone a very long time ago described Genius as "Son of the Gods and Father of Men." It is thus we speak of the Genius of a people—the French or the English, the German or the Italian; a something intangible and indefinable, it is true, but a permanent reality that we can quite well apprehend; a characteristic and distinguishing spirit that manifests itself in all that that people says and does, in its history and its literature; determining the character of both, and affecting the general character even of its thought.

An inquiry into the genius of the Roman rite is, therefore, an endeavour to get at, and to recognise, the particular, the native spirit animating and penetrating that rite, which differentiates it from others, Gallican or Gothic, Greek or Oriental. If we can, as I say, get at this and bring it into clear recognition, it is reasonable to anticipate that a great step will have been taken towards understanding how it has come about that this rite has so far recommended itself, as to supersede all others in Western Christendom. I say "all others," viewing the Ambrosian rite as really Roman at bottom. Of course, to some minds, the idea of a simple fiat of authority is sufficient explanation for any or all such change. But, as a fact, it is not commonly so that great changes do come about in this world. When the case is looked closely into, it is generally found that sound reason and rational method, after all, play the great part in human revolutions.

Our first business is to turn not to remains of antiquity, accessible for the most part to the learned only, but to the authorised and official Roman service books in current use, with which we are all familiar; and especially to the missal, the missal being the most important of them all. Perusing the masses for the ecclesiastical year in the

Roman missal, or the votive masses, the attentive reader who has no theories on the Liturgy, who will divest himself of book learning on the subject and be content to note and observe just what is obviously there, cannot fail to perceive how different in character, style, and feeling, are many of the prayers of the missal. Here is an example which I hope may bring home what I mean; it is by no means an extreme case, and I choose it for that very reason. The prayers taken for comparison are the collect, secret, and post-communion (I.) for All Souls Day, (II.) those prescribed for the Living and the Dead to be said in the third place on Ash Wednesday and during Lent.

I. *Collect*.—O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, grant to the souls of Thy servants departed the remission of all their sins, that through pious supplications they may obtain the pardon which they have always reward.

Secret.—Mercifully look down upon this Sacrifice which we offer to Thee for the souls of thy servants, O Lord, we beseech Thee; that to those to whom thou didst grant the merit of Christian faith, Thou mayest also grant its reward.

Post-Communion.—We beseech Thee O Lord that the prayer of Thy suppliants may benefit the souls of Thy servants; that Thou mayest deliver them from all their sins, and make them partakers of Thy redemption.

The following are the corresponding prayers "for the Living and the Dead," prescribed to be said throughout Lent.

II. *Collect*.—O Almighty and Eternal God who hast dominion over the living and the dead, and art merciful to all whom Thou foreknowest shall be Thine by faith and good works; we humbly beseech Thee that they for whom we have determined to offer up our prayers, whether the present world still detains them in the flesh, or the future hath already received them out of the body, may, by the intercession of all Thy saints, and the clemency of Thy pity, obtain the pardon of all their sins.

Secret.—O God who alone knowest the number of the elect who are to be placed in supernal felicity, grant we beseech Thee that, by the intercession of all Thy Saints, the names of all those who have been commended to our prayers, and of all the faithful, may be kept in that book of blessed predestination.

Post Communion.—May the mysteries which we have received purify us, we beseech Thee, O Almighty and Merciful God, and by the intercession of all Thy Saints, grant that this Thy sacrament may not be made unto us a means of condemnation, but of pardon and salvation; may it be the washing away of sins; the strength of the weak; protection against all the dangers of the world; and the remission of all the sins of the faithful, living and dead.

It suffices, I think, only to listen to the reading of these prayers to perceive how different are the two sets in spirit, in feeling, and in the run of ideas. In the one set the ideas are as simple and elementary as the expression is pregnant and precise: they are plain matter-of-fact, without imagination at all. In the second set we are in a different region:—in one aspect vague and figurative, as with the “book of blessed predestination”; in another, in the midst of theological ideas, the fruit of Christian reflection and speculation,—with “the number of the elect” and “those whom Thou foreknowest shall be Thine by faith and good works.” Again, the plain designation, “the souls of Thy servants departed,” becomes in the second set, “those whom the future world hath already received out of the body.” Once more the simple petition for the forgiveness of sins and the partaking of the redemption becomes in the second set of prayers quite a litany.

I am not now saying “this is Roman” or “that is not Roman”; I am not even saying that these two sets of prayers could not have been written by one and the same man. But I do say that in that case his mood, and sense, and feeling, issuing in his style, must have been very different on the two occasions; and that there is a difference, as great and as perceptible, as between the style of Addison and the style of Macaulay.

But when, on going further and endeavouring to trace back the history of the prayers just read, up to the earliest point at which I have any knowledge of them, I find that the one set comes from a book that is certainly, though not in every detail of its contents, Roman; and that the other set comes from a quarter that is not Roman, but may conveniently be called Gallican; a new aspect is

given to the whole question, and I begin to see possibilities of historical investigation.

It has been said that one reason for choosing the foregoing example taken from within the covers of the Roman Missal, is that the contrast is not extreme. To illustrate, however, the differing "genius" of liturgical rites, I take a second example and compare a preface of the Roman rite, and the corresponding preface from the Spanish Gothic rite commonly called the Mozarabic.

Here is that marvellous preface for Pentecost in the Roman Missal :—

"It is truly meet and just, right and salutary, that we should always, and in all places, give thanks to Thee O Holy Lord, Father Almighty Eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who ascending above all heavens and sitting at Thy right hand poured forth the promised Holy Ghost this day upon the children of adoption. Wherefore with joy that knows no bounds the whole universe exults ; * the powers, too, above and the Angelic hosts together hymn Thy glory, saying evermore Holy."

It strikes one immediately as characteristic, that whilst our Roman rite takes only some eight lines to commemorate in its preface for Pentecost that great mystery, the Gothic preface takes some eighty lines. It would be impossible and wearisome to translate the whole ; but I give the beginning and the end as showing the contrast with the Roman formula :—

"It is meet and right, O God Almighty, to acknowledge, as far as man can do, Thy gracious benefit, and ever in yearly round to celebrate the gift of eternal salvation granted this day. For who shall keep silent on the advent of Thy Holy Spirit, since through Thy Apostles every tongue of the barbarians finds voice ? But who can sufficiently tell the illapse of that fire on this day ?"

The preface then goes on by slow meander to reach and to develop the theme that the preservation of the unity of the faith is not prejudiced by the variety of

* *Totus in orbe terrarum mundus.* The prayers in which the Roman genius expresses itself are truly hard to render ; there have been in the past samples of excellence in that line, and yet to the fastidious ear and sense, even these, in all their old world beauty, are not satisfying after all.

languages spoken by the faithful. It proceeds, by and by, to touch on mystic meanings involved in the seven weeks or fifty days of Eastertide; and comes round at length again to the idea of the unity of the faith in the diversity of the nations. The preface closes thus:—"O flame that in burning confers fruitfulness, whom every intellectual creature, vivified by it, confesses to be the Lord Omnipotent; participating in whose fire in more abundant measure the Cherubim and Seraphim, magnifying the equality of the Holiness Divine and the Omnipotence of the Trinity, never resting and never wearying in their office, amidst the song of choirs of the celestial host, host crying aloud with everlasting jubilation, adore and glorify, saying: Holy."

Prefaces, even those for the greatest mysteries of religion, worked out into trifling considerations, are no rare exception in these early Gallican and Spanish books. Read in the student's closet or the library, these books are of the deepest interest; they contain also prayers of great beauty; but when regarded as living rites, as giving the prayers actually said and sung in public, they not only proclaim themselves as the productions of a late, and sometimes of a barbarous age, but they evince a tone of mind, and are the product of a spirit alien to that which we have now become accustomed to regard as most befitting the Divine worship, tutored as we have so long been in the sobriety of Roman forms. Many fine things have been said of these books, and much sentiment has been expended on them, but—a simple test—they could not stand the test of a full translation into English.

Features that are most characteristic of them are not, indeed, wholly wanting in the Roman missal, as, for instance, in the third prayer for the blessing of the palms on Palm Sunday, which begins much like an ordinary collect, and then breaks forth into an expository instruction on the mystical meaning of the ceremony. "The branches of palms, then, signify His triumph," &c., &c.;—an exposition quite in place in an address to the people, but surely not so, according to our now common notions, in a prayer addressed to God; yet the style here adopted is perfectly consonant with what is found in the prefaces of the early Gallican and Spanish missals.

We are, of course, now accustomed to a printed Roman missal, and to regard this stereotyped book, through practice, as a homogeneous whole. If we had nothing but the test of differences of style, it would be impossible to get beyond speculation as to the possibly diverse elements of which the missal may be composed. As experience shows, scientific discussions on such a basis have no end, simply because no external criterion can be brought to bear on the subject. They are commonly, therefore, best given over altogether. Fortunately, however, in the present case such a criterion is available. (We are able to decompose the present Roman missal, refer it to its sources, and recognise out of what elements or documents it is made up. The question, therefore, is no longer matter of arbitrary speculation, but of investigation into matter of fact. On this point, even so late as five years ago, I could not have spoken with full confidence. Since then I have seen, I think, every manuscript of real importance for the history of the missal at the critical period, and know now what, precisely, are the limits or the contents of the two documents or volumes of which our present missal was made up, and know also in a general, but, I think, sufficient way, what was the gradual course of the fusion of these two documents. One of them may be taken as genuinely Roman, without foreign admixture; the other, though the substratum—indeed the bulk of it—is Roman, has been considerably modified by Gallican hands. In the course of the fusion, several other non-Roman items, have been introduced. This process was going on during the whole of the ninth century in France and Germany. As to the date at which the book thus brought together was received and adopted by the Roman Church, we are altogether in the dark; but the Roman missal of the present day is unimpeachable evidence that it is a composite work; whilst the evidence is equally clear, that its compilation did not take place in Rome, and that Rome only adopted it ready made.)

It has become possible, therefore, out of the whole complex or amalgam, to get at, and separate out, the genuine Roman elements; and it is evident that out of these latter only is it possible to realise what is the special

contribution made by the Roman genius to the Liturgy of the Western Church. This can best be seen by some particular example; and to give such an example must be the next stage of our inquiry.

As the most convenient example, we may take what we are all familiar with, viz., the text of the mass as it now stands in the Roman missal; and, disembarassing it of foreign elements, put ourselves in a position to consider the pure Roman product. These foreign elements may be called to a large extent French, and, for the most part, made their appearance in the Roman mass only in the later middle ages.

1. The *Asperges*, the psalm *Judica* with the following versicles, in fact everything said up to, and including, the prayers said by the priest when he ascends to the altar, are all non-Roman and of comparatively late introduction.

2. The *Kyrie eleison* was introduced at a much earlier period, viz., the second half of the fifth century. It was imported from the East; it was not a native Roman element of the mass.

3. The same may be said of the *Gloria in excelsis*; and of the *Credo*; the former may have been introduced into the Roman mass in the sixth, the second in the eleventh century.

4. The whole of the prayers accompanying the acts of the offertory and the censing of the altar, the psalm at the lavabo, and the *Suscipe sancta Trinitas*, are all of late mediæval introduction, and they again are borrowed from what may be conveniently called French use.

5. The early history of the *Agnus Dei* is obscure, nor is it clear whether it was actually in use in Rome before the latter part of the seventh century or not.

6. The three prayers said before the communion, and all that follows the collect called the "post-communion" (except the *Ite missa est*), are again late, and all borrowed.

The purely Roman elements of our mass remain as follows:—

1. The Collect.
2. The Epistle.
3. The Blessing before the Gospel.
4. The Gospel.
5. The "Orate Fratres" and the collect, called the secret, and all that follows up to the *Pax Domini* (viz., the

Preface, Canon, Lord's Prayer, and the short prayer immediately following).

6. The collect called the Post-Communion.

7. The *Ite missa est*.

In addition to this, account is to be taken of four items of chant, viz., the Introit, Gradual, Offertory, and Communion. These, it is true, are not Roman in the sense that they originated in Rome and spread from thence elsewhere. They were adopted in Rome, speaking generally, as soon as they made their appearance and began fairly to spread.

Nothing, then, can possibly be more simple than the composition (mind, I am not now speaking of ceremonies) of the early Roman mass, say about the middle of the fifth century. The singing of the introit by the choir at the beginning on the entry of the clergy; a prayer or collect said by the celebrant; followed by readings from the Bible, separated by a psalm sung by the choir, which we call the "gradual." After the collection of the offerings of bread and wine from the people, during which the choir sing another psalm—our "offertory"—the celebrant reads a second collect having reference to the offered gifts, which collect we call the "secret." Next, comes, as an introduction to the great action of the sacrifice, what we call the "preface," said by the celebrant, and followed by a solemn choral song of praise to God, the *Sanctus*. Then follows the great act of sacrifice itself embodying the consecration, viz., the prayer called the Canon. As a preparation for the communion of the priest and people, the celebrant says the Lord's Prayer, adding a few words which are, as it were, the echo of that holy prayer, our *Libera nos, Domine*. Then comes the communion of the people, during which a psalm is sung by the choir, which we call the "communion." Finally the celebrant says a third collect, our "post-communion," and the assembly is dismissed.

It is to be observed that these collects are extremely short; three or four lines, as we have them in our missal to-day.

What can be more simple? It is the mass reduced to its least possible expression. There is not a single element that is not essential—unless, indeed, it were con-

tended that the readings from the Bible, and the preface and Sanctus, together with the singing of psalms at the entry of the clergy, before the gospel and during the acts of collecting the offerings and the communion, are superfluous.

Turning now from the parts or items of which the native Roman mass is composed to the ceremonial accompanying them, we shall find this same character of simplicity confirmed. The documents to which we have to trust for information on this matter do not in their present shape go back further than the close of the eighth century, and they not infrequently differ in points of detail; but they certainly embody customs observed some two or three centuries before. Their late date does not affect the utility of these ceremonials, or *Ordos* as they are called, for this reason: even supposing they were actually drawn up in the eighth century, of one thing we may be certain, viz., that they do not give us the simplification of a more elaborate ceremonial in use at an earlier date, but, so far as changes have been made, they would represent if anything the elaboration of something once even more simple. But I, for one, have little doubt that, with the deduction of a detail here or there—for which deduction a specific reason could be given—we possess in these ordos, substantially, the ceremonial of the Roman mass of the sixth, or even fifth, century.

To represent this ceremonial to the mind's eye is, perhaps, to-day no such easy matter, now that long habit has accustomed us to much that we view as a natural accompaniment of the service. For instance, we do not realise at once how much of added and imposing ceremonial is involved in the addition, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, of the single act of the elevation of the Host and Chalice, with its accompanying lights and torches, censings, bell-rings, and genuflexions. Next, all ideas of censuring the altar, the elements for the sacrifice, or persons, are alien to the native Roman rite, and have been introduced into it from elsewhere in the course of centuries. In trying to figure to ourselves the true and unadulterated Roman ceremonial of the mass,* we must

* In the following brief sketch certain purely ritual (as distinct from ceremonial) acts, like the offering of the gifts by the celebrant, the fraction, the commixtion, &c., which are not of a character to strike the onlooker, are passed over in silence.

conceive ritual pomp as confined to two moments: first, the entry of the celebrant into the church and up to the altar; secondly, in connection with the singing of the gospel. We have only an account of a great feast day and of a papal, or, what was the same thing, an episcopal mass; but the general character and proportion of the ceremonial is not thereby seriously affected, as in those days the determinant was not so much the dignity of the celebrant as the dignity of the service.

The procession of the celebrant and his ministers to the altar on great feasts must have been highly imposing with its seven acolytes bearing torches, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, one of whom carried a fuming censer; all in the procession, from the Pope himself down to the acolytes, being vested in what the Romans called *planetae*, and we, chasubles.

The choir of singers was already stationed in the presbyterium ranged in two groups, one on either side of the sanctuary in front of the altar. On their beginning the introit the procession enters the church. Advancing up the presbytery the seven acolytes range themselves four on one side and three on the other, to allow the procession to pass up through their midst; further on, the sub-deacons do the same. The celebrant arriving at the foot of the altar bends low, then, standing erect, prays to himself for a short space, gives the kiss of peace to his attendant ministers and prays again a short space during the conclusion of the introit.* Meantime the deacons go up the steps of the altar two and two, and kiss the ends of the altar one on either side, returning to the celebrant, who now ascends the altar steps, kisses the gospel book lying upon the altar, and afterwards the altar itself. Then he goes to his seat.

Saluting the people with *Pax vobis* (or, if the celebrant were a priest, probably *Dominus vobiscum*) and *Oremus*, he says the collect and then sits down to listen to the epistle, as do all the attendant ministers except the sub-deacons, who stand on either side of the altar. The sub-deacon goes to an ambo or pulpit unaccompanied, and without

* The gradual addition of the chant of the Kyrie, Gloria, Agnus Dei, and Credo, from the fifth to the eleventh century, did not affect the ceremonial of the mass.

ceremony, and reads the epistle. The ensuing ceremonies connected with the reading of the gospel, with the attendant lights and censuring of the book, are much the same as now, except that the gospel was sung (as it is in some places still sung) from a pulpit. At the close of the gospel, the book was kissed by all within the sanctuary.

It may be said that with this the ceremonial parts of the old Roman mass are over, just as the sacrifice is about to begin. The first act in it is what our rubrics call unfolding of the corporal. I fear I should shock my hearers were I to use the expression of our common parlance, "spreading the table-cloth"; and yet this is the term which exactly corresponds to what is prescribed in the earliest extant Roman rubrics. In those days a corporal was a cloth large enough to cover the altar. An acolyte stands holding the chalice with the corporal laid upon it; he hands the corporal to a deacon, who, with another deacon, mounts to the altar, one standing at either end; the deacon begins to unfold the corporal, throws one end of it to the other deacon, and so they spread it out over the altar; just what may be seen done any day in the laying of a table-cloth. I have been particular in noting and describing this act in plain terms for a reason. "How homely!" someone may be tempted to exclaim. Now what is called "homeliness," of any kind is the very last quality I should be disposed to predicate of the true Roman rite. The true Roman cannot forget his dignity. It is only and simply practical; the thing had to be done, and it was done in a plain and simple but the most practical manner. There are rites and times we know of that would have encompassed the act with symbolism and shrouded it in mystery. Mystery never flourished in the clear Roman atmosphere, and symbolism was no product of the Roman religious mind. Christian symbolism is not of pure Roman birth, nor a native product of the Roman spirit.

The celebrant now goes down to collect the offerings of bread and wine from the people, or, at least, from some, the most notable of them, whilst the psalm we call the "offertory" is being sung. There are careful and somewhat lengthy directions as to the mode in which these offerings are to be collected. It is of importance, however, to

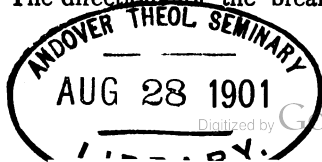
observe that these directions are not ceremonial, but, just like the direction to unfold the corporal, simply practical, purely practical, to ensure good order or to prevent blundering.

After receiving the offerings, the celebrant returns to his seat and washes his hands, whilst the deacons prepare the bread and wine on the altar. When all is ready, the celebrant comes from his seat to the altar, stands in front of it, kisses it, and says the collect called the "secret." Meantime, the various ministers, priests, and deacons, range themselves behind him, one and all with head deeply bowed, whilst the subdeacons go behind the altar and stand erect, facing the celebrant, to answer him when he says *Per omnia sæcula sæculorum*, at the end of the secret, and to the *Sursum corda*, and *Gratias agamus*. The singing of the *Sanctus* now beginning, the sub-deacons bend low and the celebrant also. When the singing of the *Sanctus* is finished, the celebrant raises himself, and, alone in the assembly standing erect, whilst all others remain with head bowed, he begins the Canon in the midst of profound silence.

There is nothing to break this silence until he raises his voice to say *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*, when the sub-deacons stand erect. At the words *Per quem hæc omnia*, the principal deacon lifts up the chalice from the altar, to enable the celebrant to touch the side of the chalice with the Sacred Host at the words *Per ipsum et cum ipso*, the doxology with which the Canon concludes.

There may be doubts as to the position of the kiss of peace in the early Roman mass owing to the transfer made by St. Gregory of the *Pater noster* to its present position. But in view of the terms used by St. Innocent I. it would seem more probable that the Pax was given at this point, immediately at the close of the Canon. The kiss of peace is given by the celebrant to the most dignified among the clergy, is passed on to the rest, and then to the people. Meanwhile the celebrant returns to his chair to say, as a preparation for the communion, the Lord's Prayer and a short prayer, at the least equivalent to the *Libera nos quæsumus* of our present missal.

The altar is now cleared by the ministers of the chalice and consecrated Hosts. The directions for the breaking



of the Hosts, preparatory to the communion, are again minute and careful, as at the offertory ; here too, however, there is nothing purely ceremonial. But the impression produced by the general communion of all the ministering clergy in the sanctuary must have been, in the highest degree, solemn and imposing. Next follows the communion of the people, during which the psalm, which we call the "communion," was sung. This finished, the celebrant went to the altar and said the collect, now called the "post-communion." A deacon sang *Ite missa est* ; the people answered *Deo gratias*, and the procession of the clergy returned to the sacristy.

I know that many later writers have found defects and deficiencies in the simple order of the Roman mass, as given in the earliest extant books, have detected a *hiatus* here, and a gap there, which has been supplied by the analogy of other rites or later practice.* These I have disregarded, on the ground that the original sources, taken as they stand, give a perfectly reasonable and sufficient account without these extraneous and conjectural helps ; they present, perhaps, not much more than the *essentials* of a mass, but still *all* the essentials.

Turning, however, from the mass in particular to the Roman rite at large, as now practised, it will be found, if the matter be looked into, that the same rule holds good, viz., that the element which can be identified as Roman is simple, and that the elaboration is a foreign graft on that plain original stock ; for instance, the rites of Palm Sunday, or the reproaches of Good Friday, or the elaborate ceremonial now attending the dedication of a church, or ordinations, or the consecration of a bishop.

In fact, I think it would not be untrue to say that what is considered most picturesque, or attractive, or devout, or affective—in a word, what is most "interesting," as the saying is, in the services of our religion ; just those things indeed which in the popular mind are considered distinctive of "Romanism," and which go to make up, in the

* I may say, in passing, that there seems a really strong presumption that the prayer, still to be found in the Ambrosian missal called *Super sindonem*, did form an item of the early Roman mass ; but I do not think this can be said of any other suggested additional item.

main, what some people call the "sensuousness of the Roman Catholic ritual," form precisely that element in it which is not originally Roman at all, but has been gradually borrowed, imported, adopted, in the course of ages. Of course it would take a very long time to make a full survey and give historical evidence in each particular case. But I think that the general position is unassailable; viz., that the genius of the native Roman rite is marked by simplicity, practicality, a great sobriety and self-control, gravity and dignity; but there it stops. And for a rite truly Roman this is just what we might expect. We must not separate in idea the Roman of pre-Christian days and the Roman under the Christian dispensation; at bottom in his instincts, in his powers, in his limitations, he is the same. It has been justly said that the Roman possessed the receptive but not the creative imagination; or, as Newman has it, in a blunt way, "Rome, except in the case of some great Popes, has never shown any great gift of origination." As we view the character of the Roman as he has revealed himself in the course of his long history, we feel that it was not in *his* soul that arose the idea of sackcloth and ashes, and the priests, the Lord's ministers, weeping between the porch and the altar; or even the loud Hosannas to the Son of David, who came meek, sitting on an ass, the people casting their garments on the way. But it is precisely in this simplicity, this practicality, this gravity, this absence of poetry, of that quality which we describe by the word "interesting," and of what our friends call "sensuousness," that lies the value and the importance of the native Roman rite for the history of public worship in Western Europe.

This paper may be fittingly closed by a rapid review of that history as illustrating the importance and also the limitations of the *rôle* played by the Roman genius therein.

It is commonly said that the main difference between the mass, or the mass books, of the East and of the West lies in this, that whilst the former supply an unvarying form to be said by the priest from year's end to year's end, the mass in the West varies from day to day according to the ecclesiastical season and the feast. It is obvious that this variety, which prevails not in the Roman only, but in all the various rites that have been in use in the West,

could not have come into existence until the ecclesiastical year was in some measure formed or developed. This did not take place until the second half of the fourth century.

We thus obtain a *terminus a quo* for dating the contents, so far as they are variable, of all extant missals, Roman, Gothic, Gallican, Ambrosian. Notices of the composition of masses and mass books in the fifth century are not uncommon. Nothing, to my mind, can be more unsatisfactory than the attempts that have been made to fix the dates of prayers by means of allusions supposed to be contained in them to current events; and we must be content to be ignorant, though if people *will* want to date things, it may be safe to say that the larger bulk of the liturgical formulæ to be found in the earliest Roman and Gallican mass books probably come from the fifth or sixth century; some few may date from the fourth; though which these are can be no more than a matter of uncertain conjecture.

Starting from the earliest extant manuscript missals, which are of the date of the seventh and eighth centuries, two propositions may be laid down that admit of no denial.

I. That there is no possibility of mistaking a Gallican or Gothic for a Roman book, and *vice versâ*; and that, not for any recondite reason that may appeal only to the professed scholar, not for any ritual peculiarity on which the rubrician would be called in to decide, but for a reason plain on the face of the books themselves—viz., a style, a run of thought, and a mode of expression, so clearly different as to declare the two things to be the product of the mind, spirit, and genius of two different peoples.

II. That the Roman character comes out nowhere more clearly, more purely, than in the missal which alone we certainly know to have been in actual use in Rome at the very close of the eighth century—the missal which is commonly called “Gregorian,” from St. Gregory the Great. There are, therefore, perfectly good grounds for saying that, up to this date, the rite of native Roman growth had preserved itself in Rome with very little of foreign admixture. But even so, the Roman mass contained in this book bears, as I believe, marks of Constantinopolitan influence. The adoption of the *Kyrie* from the East has been already mentioned. Pope Gregory the Great, who,

before his elevation to the papacy, had been the representative of the Pope and the Roman Church in the imperial city of Constantinople, was accused by some zealous persons of tampering with the Roman liturgy, in the intent to approximate to Greek practice. St. Gregory ably excuses himself, but he does not say the charge is untrue and baseless; and there was, as I read the facts, warrant for the charge. The litanies which he introduced into Rome, and to which he gave such prominence, the sedulous deprecations for mercy, mercy, mercy, were, like that great element of the early litany, the *Kyrie*, an importation into Rome from abroad. A litany is no item of Roman manufacture. But Gregory—if one of those great Roman Pontiffs endowed, as Newman says, with the gift of origination—was also a *Roman*, heart and soul, through and through; and it is not from Gregory, or in a book bearing his name, that we can expect such alterations as might tend to obliterate or would obscure the essentially Roman characteristics of the mass book of his Church as a product of the Roman genius, in all its clearness, and simplicity, and precision, and order, and practical sense, but also in what may be called the severity of its lines, and its freedom from all that can be called sentiment and effusiveness or imagination, or mystery.

Turning to France, its mass books, as we have them, are in no wise such pure product of the Gallic mind and sentiment. They are full of fragments or entire prayers copied outright from Roman books—not indeed the mass book then in use in Rome, but an earlier one which the Gregorian had displaced. This discarded Roman book, enriched with additions from Gallican sources according to individual fancy and discretion, was also, in widely spread regions, adopted bodily in the Frankish kingdom.

The state of things in France, so far as mass and missal are concerned, at the accession of Charles the Great in 769, may be summed up in two words: liturgical anarchy.

If by descent and blood a Frank, Charles was in soul and spirit a Roman—an autocrat, indeed; but a man for whom autocracy meant, not the unbridled will of the ruler, but law and order and enlightened administration in the real interests and for the true welfare of the whole body politic. We have all heard of the monarch once

designated as "Mon frère le sacristain." Charles the Great was tenfold more "the sacristan" than Joseph the Second. He made wars; he made laws; he made himself Roman Emperor; he loved letters; but he enjoyed his ecclesiastical administration and Church business of all sorts, in every detail, ritual and other. Never was he more pleased with himself than when presiding in his own chapel and setting everybody to rights. To a mind like his, the liturgical anarchy prevailing in his kingdom was intolerable; and, with his interests, the subject was sure, by and by, to engage his attention. When that time came, common sense dictated the measures most proper to put an end to the existing condition of affairs. The remedy was to be sought from without. The cardinal point of the policy of his house was close union with Rome; at Rome he had found in use a thoroughly sensible, well-ordered mass-book—the Gregorian. This he adopted as the book which in future was to be brought into use throughout the length and breadth of his dominions. On this point there must be no question or parley. But he had also the ruler's instinct, and enough perhaps of the Frankish spirit, to recognise that to many, perhaps, this pure Roman book must seem to be dry and jejune, or prove in practice a curb, too hard to be borne, on natures more florid, or more sensitive, or more rich. As a practical statesman he forthwith caused this Gregorian mass-book to be accordingly enriched with a supplement of additions selected from the liturgical books already in use in France.

This was only a beginning of changes. During the ninth century the study of sacred rites, and especially of the Roman liturgy, became in France quite a fashionable pursuit; not only Charles the Great, but his son also, the Emperor Lewis the Pious, and again Lewis's son, the Emperor Charles the Bald, showed themselves greatly interested in this branch of sacred science. The ninth century evidenced, no less than later phases of the history of liturgy, how loud and strenuous advocacy on the part of individuals of strict Roman observance, could be found a singularly convenient means for pressing on others, under cover of the august Roman name, private preferences; and it is no wonder if, at the close of the century, the Roman mass book, in the hands of its Frankish

admirers, assumed a form and embodied rites which Pope Hadrian, who sent it to Charles the Great, would not have recognised as his own.

Rome itself seems to have taken the least possible interest in all that was going on; and ended in accepting from the hands of the stranger, in place of the old Gregorianum, the mass book thus compiled in France. There is no evidence whatever to show when this change took place in Rome; nor do I know of any indication even, except such as may be involved in this one fact, that so late as the last quarter of the ninth century, the Gregorian mass book, sent from Rome to Charles the Great, was to be found in use in Northern Italy, pure, and free from the Frankish addition.

The history of the liturgy during the later middle ages is simply and merely a history of an attempt (and a successful attempt) to accommodate the native Roman books and rites to the more devout or effusive or imaginative genius of the nations which had one and all adopted them; and of the admission of these changes to a greater or lesser extent by Rome or the Roman Curia, giving them thereby for the benefit of posterity the authority of the Roman name. It was in the course of these ages that the rite was enriched with a dramatic element which it had hitherto so greatly lacked. It was then that, subjected to this influence, actions were so largely added, expressive of the words used in the service; or prayers were introduced (as, for instance, during the whole of the offertory in our present order of the mass) which should correspond to each detail of the actions performed. Practically, at that time there was, strictly speaking, no Roman rite left to follow. The Pope was very commonly, from the beginning of the twelfth century, absent from Rome; the Papal Chapel might be anywhere; and the observance of the churches in Rome itself sank, whilst the offices performed in the majestic Gothic cathedrals, now rising on every side, were ever increasing in dignity and splendour. This was the epoch of the formation of a rite that may not inaptly be called Romano-French: almost the last relics of which have disappeared in our own day; unless, indeed, the compound called "Lyons-Roman" can be regarded as a survival. This Romano-French rite was possessed of

just those qualities of picturesque and interesting elaboration in which the native Roman rite was so notably deficient; it is this rite which has excited to so large an extent the admiration and the interest of those who have occupied themselves with the historical study of liturgy in the past two generations.

The final settlement of the Papacy in Rome in the fifteenth century, brought little change, so far as the liturgy is concerned. The diaries of the Papal ceremoniars which now begin, copies of which are to be found in most of the great public libraries of Europe (and among the rest, in the British Museum) give the fullest and most elaborate details on Roman liturgy, as exhibited in the Papal Chapel and the great churches of Rome at the close of the fifteenth, and in the first half of the sixteenth century, and explain how these were no longer, as at an earlier period, models for imitation by the rest of Western Christendom. An interesting correspondence between S. Charles Borromeo and some Roman friends gives a sufficient idea of the state of the minor parish churches of Rome, and the services performed therein about the year 1560.

Taking a survey of Western Europe as a whole, it was in much the same condition of liturgical anarchy as that in which Charles the Great had found his own realm some eight centuries before. The Roman rite was the only one in use, except in the province of Milan*; but each church or diocese had modified it at discretion. There was, in face of recent movements, need once more of setting up a norm or type, and one somewhat more simple, to which the various local churches should conform. Then, as eight centuries before, in practice only one rite presented itself as possible for general adoption—viz., that of the local Church of Rome.

Fortunately, in accordance with a trait in the Roman character, the new settlement of the Roman books, made in accordance with the desire of the Council of Trent, was based on existing practice without any elaborate antiquarian investigation whether that practice was due to foreign influence, or how far it was of genuine Roman origin. As a fact, some ancient manuscripts then in the

* I use these words in a popular not (as I understand the matter) in a "scientific" sense.

Vatican Library were examined preparatory to settling the text of the missal put forth by S. Pius V. ; but, fortunately, I repeat, these were not of an earlier date than the eleventh or twelfth century, and were books which issued from the union of the Gregorian, or true Roman missal, with the compilation made in France by the direction of Charles the Great towards the close of the eighth century.

With the missal and breviary of S. Pius V., the Pontifical of Gregory XIII., the Ritual of Paul V., and, finally, the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* of Urban VIII., the history of the Roman liturgy may be said to be closed ; but the have indeed been alterations and revisions since, but the changes made have been comparatively unimportant.

From the fact that the issue of these Roman service books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with their adoption by all the churches of the West, closes, and doubtless finally closes, that chapter of liturgical history, it must not be inferred that the different racial tendencies of mind and spirit, which exhibited themselves in the Roman or Gothic and Gallican missals of the sixth or seventh or eighth centuries, and are so clearly evidenced in the modifications to which the Roman rite was subjected in the later middle ages, were no longer active nor seeking to assert themselves in public worship in our churches ; but that spirit has gone another way to work. In the middle ages that effusive, affective, and devotional spirit continually made itself felt in modifications in the liturgical books themselves, and in the mode of carrying out the strictly official or liturgical public services. This explains the great variety and diversity of the rituals, missals, and breviaries of later mediæval times ; and it explains also how the books of devotion of those days, contrary to what is common now, were drawn up on the lines of the official service books themselves ; or, as some people have put it, "there were no popular devotions in those days." But this was only because the popular devotional spirit expressed itself with freedom and liberty in the strictly liturgical services of the various local churches.

By the action of S. Pius V., and his successors, in stamping the Roman books put forth by them with a definitive character, and by the institution of a Congregation of Rites designed to keep observances on the lines

laid down in those books, such manipulation of the public service-books of the Church as was common in the middle ages in every country in Europe, was destined to be finally put an end to. But the spirit then active has never ceased to be active still, and it still finds a field for its operations. Unable to act inside and on the liturgy itself, it acts with yet greater freedom without. One path shut up, it seeks its ends by another. And this is the explanation of the rapid growth, the wonderful variety, and great development in the last two or three centuries, of what we call to distinguish them from the fixed official services, "devotions;" whilst they are evidence, too, that the two spirits betraying themselves so clearly in the first mass books of which we have knowledge, exist in their duality still.

This is the explanation, too, of that contrast which so many writers have drawn between the tone of our official prayer books, the missal, the breviary, and the rest, and the books of devotion in general use amongst us. To mention a single name; Dr. Pusey was very fond of pointing this out, now in one form, now in another; but his anti-Roman prejudices unfortunately prevented him from seeing the reason and discovering the cause. It may be urged by such persons, in another mood, that the Roman expression of the sense of the relation between man and his Maker, found in the Roman liturgy, is an inadequate or unsatisfactory expression of the aspirations of the soul. But it certainly has virtues of its own, virtues the more necessary and the more valuable, in as much as the religious history of Europe at large has shown them on more than one occasion not to have been recognised in these relations as virtues at all.

If I had to indicate in two or three words only, the main characteristics which go to make up the essential genius of the Roman rite, I should say that those characteristics were essentially soberness and sense.



